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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet includes a variety of suggestions and activities to stimulate language and thereby increase students' control over their environment and their lives. Although many of these activities can be used with elementary students, the emphasis in this collection is on language stimulation among secondary school children. The first section contains activities for teaching metaphors, fables, language, symbols, time periods, categories, the use of specific details and imagery, and story telling. The second section deals with activities for teaching surrealistic poetry, abbreviations, and book and movie criticism. The third section contains activities to help students develop interpersonal skills. The fourth section contains interaction activities. The fifth section contains activities designed to help students recognize the ways that expectations shape their lives and to examine the derivation of their sex role expectations. (TS)

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A Potpourri of Activities- for use in heterogeneously grouped secondary school English classes

By

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New York State Education Department
Bureau for Mentally Handicapped Children

CS202388

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During the Crimean War, Florence Nightengale fought long and hard, sometimes vehemently, to impose what were then rigid standards of sanitation on the male nurses who resisted these "new-fangled, feminine" ways. She replied that "whatever else a hospital should be, it should not be a source of infection."

In the same vein, whatever else a teacher should be, he or she should not be a source of dulled spirits, lowered ambitions or aspirations, a cheapened sense of self-worth, damaged self-concept, or deadened interests. And whatever else a teacher should be, she or he should be a source of heightened awareness of one's own abilities and potential. The teacher who can share a vision of the world and of individual potential that allows students to become all that they might is, for us, the truly humanistic teacher. Good teachers, we believe, care, respect themselves and others, and value life. They allow and encourage students to learn and be all that they can be and assume that every student can be much.

When we ask students to observe their environment in order to determine whether all trees are alike, careful observers report "yes" and "no." For yes, all trees have bark, trunk, branches, and leaves - and no, all trees are not the same in height, shape, growth patterns and color.

When we look at students we discover much the same phenomena - yes, they are all alike and no, they are not alike at all. With people, the similarities and differences are, at the same time, both more obvious and more subtle than those among trees. What is more important than identification and observation, however, are the decisions teachers make on the basis of their observations of similarities and differences among their students. These decisions are powerful influences in shaping students' lives as they determine their opportunities and challenges which in turn contribute much to what they understand about the world and to each child's appraisal of his/her own worth and the worth of others.

Whether students believe that they can learn and do have some control over their destiny depends greatly upon their teachers' decisions about what they are able to do.

Some assumptions made by the author of this pamphlet follow:

1) Children want to learn and grow.

2) Education should help children to gain power over their own lives - independence.

3) Language competence is essential to human independence.

4) It is important for students with varying abilities, backgrounds, and interests to interact and communicate with one another.

What we intend, then, is to include in this pamphlet a variety of suggestions and activities to stimulate language and thus to increase students' control over their environments and their lives.

Although many of these activities can be used with elementary students, our particular emphasis in this collection is language stimulation among secondary school students. Not all of the activities will be appropriate for all students - or for all teachers. It is expected that teachers will select, adapt, and build upon these ideas on the basis of their knowledge of their students and themselves. Because we are interested in assisting teachers in integrating handicapped children into regular classes, we have selected activities that we believe can be used effectively with students of greatly varying abilities and backgrounds and in the same classroom or other educational setting. We believe that students' individual responses to these activities can both facilitate their personal growth toward independence and increase their understanding of one another through sharing their quite different views of the world.

Students can respond at various levels and in a variety of ways, the important thing is response. We want students to talk, to write, to grow - to gain competence and power.

Just as teachers have long known that seldom is a single lesson or presentation appropriate for the thirty plus people in their classrooms at one time, they have also known the difficulty of providing a multiplicity of lessons/plans/learning opportunities in a single setting at a single time - and, in the secondary school, all of this in 50 minutes or less and then to change for the next group.

Two organizational approaches that we have had some success with are the multi-activitied[1] lesson plan and learning stations.

Multi-activitied lessons are those that plan for a variety of activities, groupings, and types of response during a single class period. Teachers who use the multi-activitied approach need a supply of "quickies."* These are activities that can take from two to ten minutes and serve as openers or as fillers when the activities run out before the period does. The former is planned of course, the latter is for "winging" it. We use "quickies" much more often for openers than fillers. Their value in opening class lies in their ability to do just that - OPEN the class. They open the class in that they begin the session and also in that they often are revealing or enlightening.

These "quickies" need not apply to the central theme of the lesson. What we hope they do is engage the learner, stimulate him/her, make him/her laugh or think - or both.

[1] Hipple, Theodore W. Teaching English in Secondary Schools. (New York: Macmillan) 1973.

*Some popular quickies can be found on pages [illegible]

A multi-activitied lesson might go something like this:

1) A quickie; 2) A brief review of work completed and a statement of the day's objectives; 3) A problem posed to the whole group via teacher or student lecture, film, filmstrip, or printed information; 4) Trios or small groups discuss their responses to the problem; 5) One person from each group becomes a member of a panel to present conclusions to the rest of the class; 6) Teacher or student provides closure and/or connection to past and future work.

To provide more individualization within the classroom teachers can establish centers or stations for learning where students can pursue individual interests, items tangential to class units, and/or in-depth concerns related to class, group, or individual study.

Having these centers can help to free the teacher for individual or group consultation as students work on their own in developing basic skills, problem solving skills, creative talents or personal interests.

Teachers may begin slowly with one or two centers for learning activity in a traditional classroom or work in concert with others to convert the total curriculum to centers.

Centers may contain commercial, teacher-made, or student-made materials and should have a statement of objectives, list of activities possible and/or required (with complete directions), and criteria for evaluation* so that each student can proceed at his/her own rate and with her/his own interests and needs in focus. The center's activities should engage the student and provide opportunities for self-directed and further in-depth study.

*Because we believe that students should know what and when they are learning, we believe that objectives and criteria for evaluation should always be shared. Better still they should be mutually derived.

Activities

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Ask students to think metaphorically. A simple response might be sufficient, but it is also fun and useful to justify and/or extend the metaphor. Have students indicate which of the following they are more like.

Are you more like...

a Volkswagen or a Cadillac?

Billy Jean King or Bobby Riggs?

a yes or a no?

sunrise or sunset?

a teacher or a student?

summer or winter?

a file cabinet or a liquor cabinet?

a microwave oven or woodburning stove?

Varation: 1. Have all of the members of the class arrange themselves along a continuum from Volkswagen to Cadillac or summer to winter. This involves much discussion, thought, and justification and, at the same time, helps students to get to know one another in a new way. 2. Let students decide whether a classmate is more like "a" or "b."

Follow-up: Find a tree that is somehow like you. Describe the tree and show how it is like you.

MIXED BAG

Students divide a sheet of paper into eight parts and write a word or phrase in each of the following categories: 1) color, 2) a tool or implement, 3) place, 4) a weather condition, 5) a name, 6) an animal, 7) an emotion or mood, and 8) an action or movement. Tear or cut the paper apart; collect each number separately and shuffle. Redistribute so that each student has a "mixed bag" of eight. Ask students to imagine a circumstance involving all eight (or as many as possible) and to describe it.

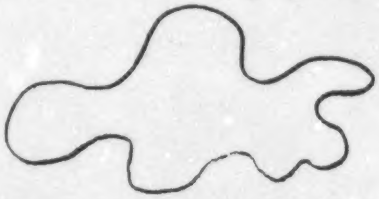
FABLES

Take a well-known saying such as "Too many cooks spoil the broth" or "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" and change it into a spoonerism, for instance, "People who live in grass houses shouldn't stow thrones." Write a fable with a spoonerism as a moral. Or just write a fable - choose your own moral.

Write a fable from a different point of view, for instance, what does the wolf think, see, feel in "The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf'"

AN EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS

Study these two shapes. Answer the following questions.



1. Which one of these shapes is named Oona? Which is named Kepick?
2. Which is a cymbol? Which is a violin?
3. Which is a saxophone? Which is a trumpet?
4. Which is a kind of gas? Which is a kind of oil?
5. Which is a melon? Which is a lemon?
6. Which is strong? Which is weak?
7. Which is wet? Which is dry?
8. Which is cold? Which is warm?
9. Which is a car? Which is a boat?
10. Which is a house? Which is an office building?
11. Which one is a banker?
12. Which one is a dancer?
13. Which one is a farmer?
14. Which one is a dietitian?
15. Which one is an economics teacher?
16. Which one is a Spanish teacher?
17. Which is male and which is female?

IT IS... IT IS NOT...

Use this to encourage students to select words that convey exact meaning and to help them to break standard patterns of description.

> Describe an object, person, or event using no form of the verb "be."

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING'

What is the difference between then and now? Gather data about what students three or four years younger than you are doing. Has seventh grade or age ten changed since you were there?

THIS IS STUPID!

How many times a day do students complain that this or that is "stupid" or "awful"? Take advantage of the occasion to work on use of supporting material.

> Ask students to write about this stupid thing telling what it is that is "stupid" and why.

WHO AM I?

In order to help students to understand that they each have many and varied personalities and ways of responding to the world have students write ten nouns or ten adjectives or ten statements beginning with "I am."

Follow-up:
1. Share lists orally.
2. Write a statement or paragraph explaning what the student has learned or become ware of as a result of making this list (or as a result of the sharing).
3. Think of the various selves one has and write a dialoge between two conflicting elements.
4. Read or listen to Nikki Giovanni's "Ego Tripping," and then re-write the list. (Watch the blossoming of metaphor!)

WORDS TO LIVE BY

This is an exercise in economy and preciseness of language as well as an opportunity to examine one's values.

What are the "Ten Commandments" of your family? of your school? of your peers? by which your teachers live? you would like to live by?

ON LEARNING

The following activity can provide invaluable information to the teacher who is trying to accomodate various learning styles. It can also give students insight into their own best learning modes.

Describe your most satisfying learning experience. (It does not have to be a school experience!) Did you acquire information, concepts, or skills? Were you physically active? Did you gain power over yourself, others, or things? Were you rewarded? Was perserverance involved? Did you prove something to yourself or others? Did you know ahead of time what had to be done?

Select the best mode for this activity: small group topic, total class discussion, questionnaire, interview, theme (concentrating on supporting details), etc.

THANKS, I NEEDED THAT

Because we often remember to voice our complaints but are not so mindful about compliments, we ask students* to do this activity.

> Write a note to someone who has done something that pleased you. What was done? How did you feel? What special message do you want to send?
>
> Send the message. (Another reminder that the teacher is not the only audience for student writing.)

HELP!

Practice concise writing by having students compose telegrams for situations. Example: You are traveling and find yourself stranded in Morroco without money. Whom do you send this to and what do you say? Or to make it more real, you have run away from home and want to return - whom do you telegraph and what do you say?

or

Send an "I urge" telegram to someone that you would like to have do something. Use day or night letter word limits.

*Teachers, too! Whenever feasible teachers should do the activities they ask students to do. This one is a must - and you need not wait for the assignment.

A REAL LEMON!

To encourage the use of specific details and invoke sensory imagery, describe a lemon - not just any lemon, but this one.

Bring a lemon (or several) to class and have students examine it closely - touch it, taste it, smell it, look at it, hear(?) it. Then students should describe the lemon for someone who has not examined it.

Variation: 1. Describe the lemon using only one of the senses. 2. Try the same exercise with popcorn.

SHORT SHORTS

When working on economy and explictness of language, have students write five to eight sentences that tell a "story" about...

-a boy and a violin.

-an apple and an orange.

-a bicycle and a car.

-an employer and an employee.

-a student and a teacher.

Variation: 1. Put three unlike objects in a paper bag. Students will write a short-short story about these objects.

2. Give students a one-word title: happiness, oranges, alone, green. Have them write five sentences - no more no less - on the topic.

3. Use five lines rather than five sentences.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Each student (or group) selects a topic of interest to her/him. The students then list everything that they know about it and everything that they would like to know about it.

Follow-ups: 1. Decide what methods and sources one would use to discover the desired information.

2. Students do the research to find out what they wish to know.*

JOTTO

Five letter word game. Students can play this one quietly in pairs at their desks. Each person thinks of word (5 letters) and then by saying other five letter words and their opponent telling them how many letters in the guessed word are in their secret word, the players try to deduce what the letters are in the "secret" word, then their order, then the word. (Note: students tell only how many letters are in both words, not which letter.)

*A CAVEAT: Once students have acquired the new information, the experience need not be documented in a deadly dull (often plagiarized) "report." Let them discover innovative and interesting ways to share the information with their classmates if sharing is necessary. (Avoid, in all writing experiences, letting the teacher be the sole audience.) Sometimes students might be encouraged to do this activity just for the joy and satisfaction of learning something they want to know.

CATEGORIES

Students suggest a five-letter word. Example "Table." Then students name five categories. Individuals try to find words to complete the chart. See example.

Category	T	A	B	L	E
Cars					
Cereals					
Musicians					
Football Teams					
Vegetables					

When each student has filled as many spaces as possible, let pairs work together briefly to try to finish the grid.

MORE CATEGORIES

Leader thinks of a word that goes with others in various contexts and lists three of these related words. Class members try to add correct words to the list until everyone recognizes the category. For example, leader lists foot, room, basket; and students add base, tether, ping pong, bearing, spit to go with BALL.

Find interesting pictures from a photography magazine or some other source. Have students write their own captions.

Write new captions for old cartoons.

Select or draw an illustration for a favorite poem or a book cover or a quotation.

FOR SALE

Write want ads for unusual objects - kittens, old WW II bomber, sinking sailboat, kids' sandbox, whatever. In ten words or less, twenty-five spaces, or a similar limitation entice the seller. This might also be done with real objects and placed on a class bulletin board. To test the effectiveness of one's language - does the object sell?

Variations: 1. Identify favorite commercials and tell which elements make them effective.

2. Write a commercial about yourself - What about you might others also like? What can you do well?

3. Sell self to interviewer for a specific job.

SUPPOSE...

Imagine that you are level with the grass. What do you see? Are there bugs, worms, roots on the ground? How do they look if you are very very small? How does a grain of sand look? A blade of grass? A spider's web? Are colors different? How much of the world can you see?

If you are a worm, where do you live? How does it look? How does it feel? Do you like the sunshine above the ground or the darkness of underground? Is the ground wet or dry? Which do you prefer? What do you eat? What do you do if you meet another worm? An ant? A person?

Do you wonder what lies beyond the next clump of grass? Is a meter a long distance to travel? What do you think when you see a flower? Do you think it is pretty, do you want to smell it, or do you want to eat it? What do you do if it has insecticide on it?

MAD, SAD, GLAD

Write a brief account of the last three times you were angry. What did you do? How did you feel? Are you glad about how you responded? What would you do differently if the same situation occurred today?

BUTTON, BUTTON...

Find some people to work with and form a poster button company. You will need construction paper, scissors, straight pins and pens. Cut shapes from colored construction paper and use straight pins to pin them to clothing. Write messages on each one. Collect words to use on your buttons; experiment with words that rhyme; look at signs, posters, billboards and poems to find "catchy" phrases; try your hand at puns; listen to slang words and jingles on television. Play with words and put them together in different ways. What does the message tell about the person who wears it. What does s/he want it to tell? Why does s/he wear it? What could you say that starts "I'm..." or "Stop..." or "Go..." or "Be"?

DEAR JANE OR JOHN DOE

You have been asked to help a friend who wants to know...

-How to send love to someone far away.

-How to make holidays more meaningful.

-How to tell parents, "I love you, but leave me alone."

-How to help another friend who has a body odor problem.

-How to get along with a sister or brother.

-How to make/save money.

(If the problem is real, the advisee might respond to each alternative with a note to indicate that s/he will try it, will consider it, or will not try it.)

HERE AND NOW

Stop class. Write the date and time. For five minutes write what you are doing/thinking/feeling here and now.

* * *

Write ten sentences each beginning with "Here and now" that describe what is happening to you rithe now.

* * *

I learned... I wonder... I realize... I wish... I am glad that... Finish the sentence on a graffiti board, in your journal, or with an oral "whip" around the room.

* * *

Find a place to sit for one hour. During that hour write whatever you are feeling, wishing, thinking.

IMAGINE

Imagine that you are a Martian anthropologist who has come to observe Earthlings at work and play. You have no knowledge of life on Earth so you must usually guess at what is going on.

How would you describe...

-an orchestra?

-a rock band?

-two people arguing?

-a football game?

-a wedding?

-people putting on make-up?

Variation: You also have no sense of hearing.

GETTING SPECIFIC

An intern created an ad like this one and put it on the overhead projector. After a brief discussion of the need for a real friend, he asked the students to meet with someone that they did not know very well and interview to find out the information required on the order form (see page). After the order form was completed, he asked students to write an appropriate business letter ordering a ROBO-PAL and describing methods to be used for delivery and payment.

Follow-up: A week later students were told that their ROBO-PALs had arrived, but that they were defective. The assignment then was to write a letter of complaint specifying what was unsatisfactory and what the writer wished the student to do about it.

EXCLUDED?

SOLITARY?

ISOLATED?

MARooNED?

OUTCAST?

Lonely?

ESTRANGED?

FORLORN?

DESOLATE?

FRIENDLESS?

I want to be your friend.

ORDER NOW

ROBO-PAL

Someone who will be on your side.

... share your interests.
... go where you want to go.
... help with your homework.
... LISTEN to you.
... keep your secrets.
... BE YOUR FRIEND.

SEND IMMEDIATELY:

ROBO-PAL, INC.
1 LONESOME STREET
NOWHERESVILLE, N.Y. 01020

ROBO-PAL ORDER FORM

Color of hair:

Color of eyes:

Height:

Weight:

Sex:

Other important physical characteristics:

Favorites

Food:

Song or type of music:

Singer or group:

In-School thing:

Out-of-School thing:

Car:

Person most admired:

Place to be:

Movie:

T.V. Show:

Poem:

Saying:

Major Interests:

Send Delivery Instructions.

QUICKIES - FOR OPENERS

To begin a multi-activities lesson, to stimulate thinking, to have fun - use one of the following activities. They are short, self-contained, and a lot of fun for both teachers and students.

Surrealistic Poetry

Divide the class in half; if the number is uneven, the teacher joins one half. Each person in the first half, writes a complete question beginning with "What is...?" Each person in the second half of the class writes a complete sentence beginning with "It is...." Then, giving everyone a chance to participate, students on alternate sides ask "What is...?" and respond "It is...." The resulting combinations are magical and like fireworks - some sparkling and some duds, but well worth the five minutes. No threats, no promises, no fears, and lots of hope for the unlikely and perfect combination that often comes regardless of the individual's ability, background, or knowledge.

My Grandmother's Game... exclusion-inclusion game.

My grandmother likes kittens, but not cats; walls, but not ceilings; cheese, but not crackers; Betty, but not Sue; green, but not blue. As soon as a person "gets" the inclusion-exclusion categories, s/he adds a response. Continue until all (or nearly all) have caught on. Use many variations - double letters, vowels, words without "s" in them, words with an "o" or double vowels, etc.

Hink Pink

Given a definition, the students try to suggest a rhyming adjective and noun that identifies the thing defined. Example, police chief = top cop; short poem = terse verse. By expanding the name (Hinky-Pinky) to extra syllables, we add another dimension. Example: dieting gambler - thinner winner. Try Hinkety-Pinkety and get high class theft = snobbery-robbery. Have students help in definitions, or have class start a collection of them.

What Did You See?

Form a circle. Place from 15-20 familiar objects on a platter. Look carefully at the objects for a short time or pass the platter around. Write down what you remember seeing. This can also be done with a list on the board or numbers or a single picture with many elements. It is sometimes worthwhile to ask students to share the methods they used to remember.

The Critic

Ask students to recommend a book they have read or movie they have seen recently. Why is it recommended?

Nemesis

Teach two or three spelling demons. All right, separate, etc. are sometimes easier to remember if discussed in short intervals. Lists of most common misspelled words are available. Remember mnemonic devices -- all right/all wrong, separate has "a rat" in it.

e.g.

Teach abbreviations - i.e., viz., etc., R.S.V.P. are encountered much in reading and it is satisfying to know what they mean.

Ne Plus Ultra

Teach some common Latin phrases - just for fun. Students enjoy having some esoteric information and it just might prove useful, too. They might already know some like corpus delicti, or modus operandi from their favorite detective show, but what about caveat emptor, persona non grata, quid pro quo, and the like?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Because we think that it is important for students to develop interpersonal skills, we offer the following activities as "warm-ups." These are activities designed to promote student interaction, they allow students to reveal something about themselves and learn something about others. They can be done as a total class or in groups of eitht to ten, simultaneously.

When activities of this type are done early in the school term, we avoid the often found problem of having students who have "sat together" for 180 days and don't even know each other's names. It is particularly important to take time for these activities when the student body is very mobile or when its members travel from various areas to school.

Warm-up Activities (or more "quickies")

Someone gives a short lecture to the rest of the group. Listeners pay attention to the speaker while, at the same time, noting how they listen. - In what position is your body? What do you do with your eyes? Where are your hands? How tense are you? Where do you feel it? What do you think about? How do you feel being a listener? Can you give the speaker any suggestions?

* * *

Introduce yourself. Throw an object, a balloon, a ball, an eraser to someone else who introduces himself, and so on.

* * *

Close your eyes and picture the room you are in. Try to remember how the persons look who are sitting around you, on your left and right sides, behind and in front of you. Open your eyes. Look at the people. Leave the room and come in again. Look at the room from every angle; use all your senses. Move the furniture around. Place yourself where you feel comfortable.

* * *

Divide into groups of six or eight with one person in the center of each group. If you are the center person, say your name and place it, as you would a physical object, into the hands of each person in the circle. The receiver repeats your name and then returns the gift by saying his name and placing it in your hand. After everyone has been in the center, break up the circles and move freely around the room, giving and receiving names from hand to hand.

Remember a room in a school where you wrote your name as a child. Write your name holding the pencil or pen in the "wrong" hand and imagine that room. Draw a floor plan. If you can't remember, pretend. How does it feel to be that pupil again? Tell somebody else or write in your journal.

* * *

Write a secret about yourself on a piece of paper. Place it in a box or a hat. Others add their secrets. Each in turn draws a secret, reads it aloud, and says it as if it were his own secret. Speak in the first person.

* * *

Share your favorite poem or quotation. Write a one or two line "quotation" of your own. What words can you offer to live after you?

* * *

Sit in a chair in the center of a circle. Each chair represents an important person in your life, and as you sit in each chair, play the part of that person. Talk to these persons about what you are, and what they want of you, and what you want for yourself.

* * *

Focus on a conflict. Use three chairs. Let the adult in you talk to the child in you and the parent in you. Parents tell you what you should do, and children want to do what they want to do. What do your voices say?

Finish a sentence. Share the answers with somebody or put the sentences in a hat, draw them out, and take turns answering aloud. Use only one or two at a time. Sentence beginnings that seem to evoke good responses follow.

I particularly like people who...

I'm regarded by most people as...

Strangers make me feel...

If you ask me...

If only...

I believe that...'

In a new situation I usually...

When I'm 30, I think I'll be...

I feel really happy when...

I feel sad when...

What makes me furious is...

When I'm in trouble, I turn to...

What I like least about school is...

What makes me anxious is...

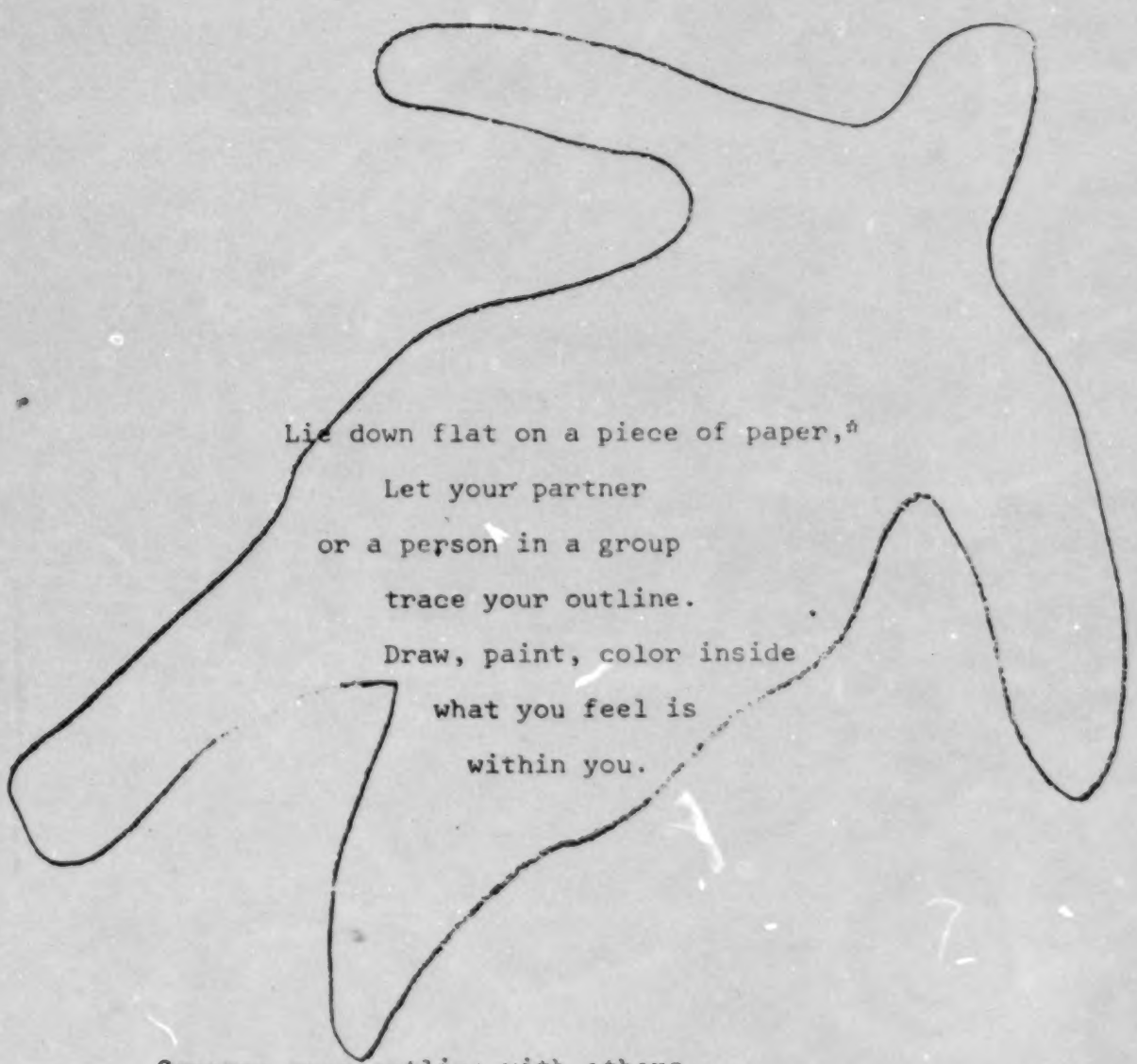
If there were no grades, I'd...

If I think a teacher doesn't like me, I...

When there's no right answer, I feel...

What most embarrasses me is...

I learn best when...


Lie down flat on a piece of paper,*
Let your partner
or a person in a group
trace your outline.
Draw, paint, color inside
what you feel is
within you.

Compare your outline with others.

Are any like yours?

*Have students draw freehand outlines if this procedure causes problems.

What have you learned? Write one idea on a slip of paper. Drop it in a box. One by one, come up, pick a slip, read it, and comment. Guess who said it.

* * *

Put on the board a question you've discovered. What's worth knowing?* What's worth teaching?*

* * *

Create or find an object that represents you - as Mama's plant in Raisin' in the Sun. Tell why or just show it.

* * *

Make a collage showing the many facets of you - your dreams, ambitions, worries, successes, values, etc.

* * *

Form two lines facing each other. The first persons in each line begin a conversation. At any point, the person behind a speaker can tap his shoulder. The speaker then goes to the end of the line and the conversation continues between the new speakers at the exact point it was interrupted.

* * *

*These questions are worth exploring with your students and colleagues. You may also wish to look at what Postman and Weingartner have to say about what's worth knowing in Teaching as a Subversive Activity.

WORKING TOGETHER

Often, in school and in life, we expect people to work effectively and efficiently together. Students who are active in school organizations or athletics (usually less than 20 percent of the student body) have some experience in working cooperatively toward a goal; most other students have few school-based opportunities to learn or practice effective human relations skills. We believe that these skills are important enough to warrant attention in school and offer the following activities as starters for teachers who desire their students to develop skill in and awareness of the effects and affects of human behavior.

INTERACTION ACTIVITIES

Plan the Perfect Crime -

No holds barred as to what students dream up. Crimes will be exchanged among groups who try to find flaws in the crimes.

Paraphrasing -

Form small groups. Discuss a topic of general interest. Before you respond to another's comments put his ideas in your own words. If they're not acceptable to him, try again. Discussion is slower, but understanding is greater.

Sequencing -

Give each group of five or six students an envelope with several sentences that make a paragraph. Each group will arrange the cut-up sentences in what they consider to be a logical order. Have them discuss and defend their order before showing the original. They should see that it is possible to have more than one "correct" order. (Have students write the paragraphs for this and other exercises and free your time to work individually with other students.)

The Daily Planet -

Clip a news story or lead from a newspaper article. Give a clipping to each group of three to five students and have them develop the story as a group. They may begin with lists of additions and move toward the actual writing of the story.

Styles of Leadership -

Create an apathetic committee of four or more people. Three people volunteer to act as leaders and go out of the room. One re-enters at a time and tries to energize the group. After each has had a turn without seeing the other in operation, open up class discussion on the three approaches. Which leaders were most effective and why?

Stereotyped Roles -

Decide on some discussion topic (i.e., What are eight characteristics of a good teacher? Place in rank order.). Create a demonstration group. Put on slips of paper the names of typical group roles such as the Warrior, the Peacemaker, the Informer. Six people draw from a hat, form a group, and play out their roles. The class observes and tries to guess what roles are being played. Then replay the discussion, changing roles or groups. Try the same discussion without assigned roles. Do you recognize yourself? Are you stuck in a role? Are you imprisoned by it? How can your group help you? How can you help yourself?

Group Writing -

Make up opening sentences (or use real ones from literature or your students' writing). Write one on the top of a page for each student. Students each add a logical second sentence and pass it to the next person who continues with a sentence of his/her own.

WRITING ABOUT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Group Task

I. Represent "ideal" school/family/governmental organization with tinker toys or construction paper, wire, string, etc.

II. Build a tower with newspaper and masking tape that will be judged for its height, stability, and aesthetics.

Writing

1. What did you have in mind? Why was it done this way?

2. Reflect on the experience and respond to any of the following questions:
   a. What percentage of the plan did you contribute?
   b. What percentage could you have contributed?
   c. Did your group have a leader? Who? How was s/he chosen? What was characteristic of the leadership style?
   d. What best characterizes your role in the planning session: wallflower, dominator, facilitator, inventor, negativist, questioner, clarifier, humorist? Is there a word that describes your participation even better?
   e. How were your ideas received during the planning session?
   f. List three specific things that were done during the planning session that you feel were helpful.
   g. List one thing that you did during the planning session that you feel was helpful.

3. Freely respond to the activity or any aspect of it.

P-T-R-O-V-A -- AN EXERCISE IN COOPERATION

Choose any six letters that will make words. We have had success using P, T. R. O, V, and A.

Divide the class into groups of six and assign one or two recorders to each group. Members of the group are each assigned one letter which they draw on notebook paper and hold in front of them. At a signal from the teacher or timekeeper and without talking, pushing, or shoving students begin to make words. The recorder keeps track of each word. Call time after 5-7 minutes. Compare the lists of words. Ask students to talk about how they felt and behaved during the activity. How did it feel to be "V," for instance? Could vowels do anything on their own? What were the causes of frustration or satisfaction?

COOPERATION-COMPETITION

Two students make a list of ten words that will be unfamiliar to the class. Divide the rest of the class into two groups who try to find the definition of each word. One group competes, how fast can <u>you</u> find all of the meanings? The other group cooperates, all work together to find the meanings. At the end of a specified time (about 15 minutes) evaluate and discuss the relative merits of each approach.

WRITING WITH A PARTNER

Students select partners and take a walk together. They should have notebooks and pens for taking notes as they walk. Ask students to pay careful attention to what they see and feel. You might say something like the following.

> As you prepare to leave the classroom, will you walk side by side or will one of you go out first? How do you feel about the way you are walking? Look at the room you are leaving. How do you feel about leaving it. How does your partner feel? Who will open the door? What kind of door is it? Do you like the door? Do you want to get through it quickly or would you rather linger? What are your impressions as you leave the room? Now that you are outside the door, how do you feel about the room? the door? your partner? the hallway? the walk you intend to take? What do you see in the hallway? What do you think about as you walk down the hallway? Go outside. Does it feel different to be outside? How is it different from being inside? Is it cold or warm, windy or calm, sunny or cloudy? How do you feel about the weather? Does the building seem different from the outside? In what ways? Does it seem smaller or larger? Do you walk the same outside as you did inside? Do other people behave differently outside? Walk around the building. Would you rather walk around the building or through it? Why? What do you see and feel as you walk around the building? How are your feelings different from your partner's? Do you feel the same on the shady side of the building as you do on the sunny side?

When students return to the room, ask them to read their notes together and organize them into a two-page description of their walk. Some approaches that students might take to this writing assignment are: to work together to tell about each part of the walk, to contrast their views of what was seen and felt by alternating paragraphs, to write separate accounts of the walk and join them with an introductory paragraph and a transitional paragraph.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

These activities are designed to have students examine the ways that expectations shape their lives and look at the derivation of their sex role expectations. These are particularly relevant to the developmental needs of adolescents.

LOOKING AT ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Go to any newspaper or catalog (Sears, Wards, Pennys, etc.). Cut out pictures of toys, clothes or games for children. Note the descriptions or pictures or captions which segretage items for boys and girls. Rewrite the description which would make such items for all little people.

* * *

Present 3-4 commercials or skits portraying men in roles of women for housework, cosmetics, dating or the family roles.

* * *

Go through your friendly grocery shelves and note names of household products. Explain why you think such names are used. Select your own names and make up a realistic commercial showing the product's use.

* * *

Draw a series of stick figures (indistinguishable as to sex) holding objects or doing something (e.g., holding a broom, driving a van, holding a bat). Have the students make up stories about them.

* * *

Keep a running list of "ways I have benefited by being a male (or female) today." Or keep two parallel lists, plus and minus, for the day or week.

Have students conduct interviews with prominent men, asking them for their favorite home repair techniques, how they combine marriage and career, what size suit they wear, how the manage to stay young and handsome. This should illustrate some of the conventions that keep men's and women's roles strictly defined.

* * *

"Today is my 80th birthday" -- Have students look back at and describe their lives since leaving high school.

* * *

Allow each student ten minutes to make a list of characteristics of women (or men). If they have difficulty, tell them to try thinking of one woman (or man) they know. Then divide them into small groups (3-5) and have them first read their lists, then say which characteristics on the list are true of themselves, then which charcteristics they like. Then have the small group, as a team, select ten items from the combined lists that they think are most important. It is essential that they agree on the meaning of each characteristic. Then have them rank the items from one to ten. Who is the person they have created? The ideal woman (or man)? Are the characteristics positive or negative? Try several variations: girls working on female characteristics and boys on male, vice-versa, both sexes working on the same sex, all-female and all-male small groups, mixed small groups. Have the teams compare their results.

Visit an elementary or nursery school. Observe and take notes of the activities being offered girls and boys; the distinctive ways (f any) that boys and girls are handled by teacher. Interview the teacher on his or her attitudes toward equal education. Also, look at some of the readers used...check to see what roles women and men are seen in.

* * *

Analyze five nursery rhymes or children's stories which include women alone or both men and women (boys and girls). Write down the nursery rhymes or explain the descriptions, roles played by the girls and boys in the stories. What is the role played by each person? What do you think this implies or suggests as to the way boys and girls see themselves?

* * *

Make up a collage or montage or simply draw what society considers to be the "ideal woman" and the "ideal man." Then explain your montage, etc., ... include: pphysical description, emotional characteristics, personality and mannerisms. You may do the same thing ... but instead use the idea for students' own age "popular girl" or "popular boy."

* * *

Make a list of at least ten verbal expressions...cliches or sayings which involve the traditional view of woman. Do the same for a man. Present this to the class by skit or through some visual presentation.

* * *